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INCOMING TELEGRAM

Department of State

SECRET 177

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Action
SS

Info

FROM: PARIS

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 1901, OCTOBER 22, 9 PM

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NIACT

ELITE

EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY

DEPTEL 2300.

I ACCOMPANIED MR. ACHESON THIS AFTERNOON WHEN HE CALLED ON PRESIDENT DE GAULLE AT FIVE PM LOCAL TIME. MR ACHESON BEGAN CONVERSATION BY PRESENTING PRESIDENT DE GAULLE WITH COPY OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER CONTAINED DEPTEL 2304. HE ALSO HANDED PRESIDENT DE GAULLE PART ONE OF PRESIDENT'S SPEECH SINCE OTHER SECTIONS NOT YET RECEIVED BY EMBASSY. HOWEVER, THEY WILL BE DELIVERED TO PRESIDENT DE GAULLE'S CHEF DE CABINET AS SOON AS RECEIVED.

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE READ BOTH COMMUNICATIONS CAREFULLY AND THEN REMARKED THAT HE WOULD WELCOME FURTHER ELUCIDATION BY MR. ACHESON.

MR. ACHESON OUTLINED BACKGROUND OF PRESENT SITUATION IN CUBA, REASON FOR PRESIDENT'S PROPOSED ACTION, GOING INTO CONSIDERABLE DETAIL, EMPHASIZING THAT MAXIMUM BUILDUP HAD OCCURRED WITHIN PAST WEEK, AND SAYING THAT HE HAD MR. SHERMAN KENT WITH HIM WHO WAS PREPARED TO BRIEF PRESIDENT DE GAULLE IN MORE DETAIL.

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE LISTENED WITH OBVIOUS INTEREST AND THEN REMARKED THAT US RPT US FOR FIRST TIME FELT ITSELF THREATENED SINCE MISSILES IN CUBA WERE AIMED AT US AND THEY HAD NO OTHER REASON

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-2- 1901, OCTOBER 22, 9 PM, FROM: PARIS

REASON TO BE IN CUBA SAVE THREATEN US. HE CONTINUED THAT PRESIDENT KENNEDY WISHES TO REACT, AND TO REACT NOW, AND CERTAINLY FRANCE CAN HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THAT SINCE IT IS LEGAL FOR A COUNTRY TO DEFEND ITSELF WHEN IT FINDS ITSELF IN DANGER.

HE THEN REFERRED TO BLOCKADE AND SAID THAT OF COURSE THERE WOULD BE NO OBJECTION ON PART OF FRANCE TO US INITIATING SUCH BLOCKADE, BUT HE HIMSELF HAD DOUBTS AS TO ITS EFFECTIVENESS. HE WONDERED WHETHER IT WOULD BE SUFFICIENTLY EFFECTIVE TO CAUSE CUBANS TO REMOVE MISSILES AND THEIR BASES. HE ADMITTED IT WOULD AT LEAST STOP ADDITIONAL MISSILES GOING TO CUBA.

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE THEN REFERRED TO OUR PROPOSAL TO CONSULT WITH OTHER AMERICAN NATIONS, ASKED WHETHER THAT WOULD BE EFFECTIVE, AND REMARKED HE HIMSELF DID NOT KNOW.

WITH RESPECT TO PROPOSED ACTION IN SECURITY COUNCIL, PRESIDENT DE GAULLE REMARKED THAT HE REALIZED THAT THIS WAS IN LINE WITH OUR POLICY. PERSONALLY HE DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE PRACTICAL. THERE MIGHT BE MUCH TALK, BUT HE DOUBTED WHETHER SECURITY COUNCIL WOULD BE EFFECTIVE.

IN CONCLUSION, PRESIDENT DE GAULLE SAID THAT HE FELT BLOCKADE WAS ONE POSITIVE STEP, AND HE REPEATED THAT FRANCE MADE NO OBJECTION THERETO. PRESIDENT DE GAULLE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT IF BLOCKADE WERE INITIATED USSR WOULD REACT PERHAPS IN NEIGHBORHOOD OF CUBA, BUT MORE LIKELY IN AREA WHERE THEY COULD ACT MORE EFFECTIVELY. PRESIDENT DE GAULLE FELT THEY WOULD CHOOSE BERLIN SINCE THEY WOULD WANT TO MAKE WEST SUFFER, AND THIS WAS WHERE THEY COULD DO SO MOST EFFECTIVELY. IF THEY CHOOSE BERLIN, PRESIDENT DE GAULLE SAID, THREE POWERS WOULD HAVE TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS; NUMBER OF COUNTERSTEPS HAVE BEEN PREPARED AND THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE TAKEN.

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE CONTINUED THAT PERHAPS SOVIETS WISHED, AND PERHAPS US RPT US ALSO WISHED TO SOME EXTENT, TO INTENSIFY INTERNATIONAL SITUATION SOMEWHAT TO BRING ABOUT TALKS.

PERHAPS

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-3- 1901, OCTOBER 22, 9 PM, FROM: PARIS

PERHAPS THAT IS MR. KHRUSHCHEV'S VIEW. PRESIDENT DE GAULLE SAID HE DID NOT THINK WE WOULD HAVE WAR BUT IF SOVIETS FORCED US IN SUCH PLACES AS BERLIN, FRANCE WOULD BE WITH US, "FRANCE WILL ACT IN ACCORD WITH YOU".

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR HAVING BEEN INFORMED BY PRESIDENT. HE SAID THAT HE REALIZED THIS HAD BEEN DONE AFTER DECISION HAD BEEN MADE, BUT NEVERTHELESS APPRECIATED BEING INFORMED. HE SAID HE WOULD REPLY TO PRESIDENT'S LETTER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, BUT MEANWHILE IF MR. ACHESON SAW PRESIDENT PLEASE EXPLAIN DE GAULLE'S APPRECIATION AND TELL HIM HE WOULD BE REPLYING TO HIS MESSAGE.

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE SAID THAT IN THIS SERIOUS TIME IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT GOVERNMENTS KEEP IN CLOSE CONTACT. THIS WOULD BE DONE IN WASHINGTON THROUGH AMBASSADOR ALPHAND AND THROUGH AMBASSADOR BOHLEN WHEN HE ARRIVES HERE SHORTLY. PRESIDENT DE GAULLE RUMINATED THAT WHILE ONE NEVER KNEW WHAT REAL INTENTIONS OF SOVIETS WERE, HE DID NOT THINK PRESENT SITUATION WOULD LEAD TO WAR. HE THOUGHT IT MIGHT BE GREAT MANEUVER TO ENGAGE US IN TALKS ON BERLIN AND ON CUBA. BERLIN WAS THE SENSITIVE POINT AND IT WAS THERE THAT SOVIETS NO DOUBT WOULD PRESS. PERHAPS ALSO KHRUSHCHEV HAD IN MIND IMPRESSING OTHER LATIN AMERICAN STATES BY SHOWING THEM THAT USSR COULD ESTABLISH THEMSELVES ANYWHERE IN WESTERN HEMISPHERE AND COULD NOT BE MOVED OUT. HE REPEATED HE HOPED BLOCKADE WOULD BE EFFECTIVE, BUT DID NOT THINK IT WOULD BE.

AT THIS POINT MR. KENT WAS CALLED INTO ROOM TO BRIEF PRESIDENT DE GAULLE. PRESIDENT DE GAULLE WAS OBVIOUSLY VERY INTERESTED IN BRIEFING AND SHOWED KEEN INTEREST, ASKING PERTINENT QUESTIONS, WHICH REVEALED HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND. IN ADDITION TO SPECIFIC TECHNICAL QUESTIONS, HE INQUIRED AS TO CUBA'S SELF-SUFFICIENCY WITH RESPECT TO FOOD, PETROLEUM, ETC.

HIS OBVIOUS CONCERN WITH THIS CUBAN DEVELOPMENT WAS EXPRESSED IN HIS STATEMENT: "US HAS BEEN DEFENDING EUROPE IN ORDER THAT EUROPE MAY NOT BECOME BASE AGAINST US. NOW THERE IS BASE IN AMERICAN DIRECTED AGAINST US. THIS IS NOT A GOOD THING."

PRESIDENT

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-4- 1901, OCTOBER 22, 9 PM, FROM: PARIS

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE INQUIRED WHAT COUNTRIES WERE BEING INFORMED IN SIMILAR MANNER. MR. ACHESON REPLIED UK, FRANCE, GERMANY.

PRESIDENT DE GAULLE WAS FRIENDLY, RELAXED AND DEEPLY INTERESTED. HE APPRECIATED SIGNIFICANCE OF SITUATION RAPIDLY, AND OBVIOUSLY FOUND HERE SUBJECT WHICH INTERESTED HIM CONSIDERABLY. HIS CHEF DE CABINET WAS EXTREMELY COOPERATIVE IN MAINTAINING SECRECY OF INTERVIEW, AND WE DROVE TO ELYSEE IN ELSYEE MOTORCARS AND WERE TAKEN IN BACK DOOR TO AVOID ANY LEAKAGE TO PRESS OF MR. ACHESON'S VISIT.

LYON

DMJ

NOTE: Advance copies to SS-O 10-22-62 CWO-M

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